

Deep Fire

Friday, May 1, 2009 8:00 am

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Cypress National Preserve
33100 Tamiami Trail East
Ochopee, FL 34141



Firefighters completed burning the northeast section of the fire along Bear Island Grade last night. Winds became favorable in the mid-afternoon allowing the firefighters to finish this important section of the line. State Highway 29 was opened to general traffic this morning from I-75 north to Oil Well Road. Law enforcement officers will patrol the road heavily to ensure that motorists maintain a safe speed and to assist fire equipment operating in the area. **There will be no afternoon update today. The morning update tomorrow will be the last produced by the Southern Blue Team for this fire.**

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Today

Fire Size: 30,005
Containment: 85%

Weather forecast calls for generally easterly winds with predicted high temperature around 90 degrees. Crews will continue work to secure all fire lines, mop up the interior and watch for spot fires. The Southern Blue Team will begin work to transition management of the fire to a local Incident Management Team. The transition of command will take place on Saturday May 2, 2009 at 6:00 pm with the Blue Team demobilizing most of the firefighters by Saturday night.

What Happens After The Fire?



The fire-adaptive plant communities of the Big Cypress Swamp recover rapidly from the effects of a wild or prescribed fire. The recovery process begins immediately after the fire passes and takes place quickly in this warm and wet sub-tropical climate. The swamp is actually rejuvenated by fire which has been a vital part of this ecosystem for many thousands of years. Many plants and animals rely on the occurrence of periodic fire to exist. When a wild or prescribed fire occurs, the animals in the path of the fire walk, run, burrow, or fly to a safe area. After the fire has passed the animals return and feed on new plant growth and food exposed by the fire. The above ground plant parts quickly sprout from their root systems and seeds in the soil germinate due to nutrients from the burn and warmth from the sun.

Area and Road Closures

All highways closed as a result of the Deep Fire have been reopened to all traffic. Motorists should drive defensively as fire equipment will be entering and exiting the highways at unexpected locations. Law enforcement will patrol SH 29 heavily to help prevent accidents and assist motorists and fire personnel. In the interest of safety, Big Cypress National Preserve has enacted some recreational access closures. These are necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and fire personnel. All areas in the Bear Island Unit, and all areas north of Fire Prairie Trail, including the trail itself, in the Deep Lake Unit are closed.